

Message Text

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S E C R E T STATE 129844

EXDIS

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TAGS:PBOR, IS, SA, LE, XF, UNSC

SUBJECT: SOUTH LEBANON: SECRETARY'S TALK WITH PRINCE SAUD

1. THE FOLLOWING ARE EXTRACTS FROM A STILL UNCLEARED
MEMCON OF A LUNCHEON MEETING BETWEEN THE SECRETARY AND THE
SAUDI FOREIGN MINISTER ON MAY 18.

--SOUTH LEBANON AND UNIFIL
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THE SECRETARY NOTED THE REAL PROBLEMS OF MORALE IN THE UN
PEACEKEEPING FORCES IN SOUTH LEBANON AS A RESULT OF PALES-
TINIAN ATTACKS ON THE FORCES. AS A RESULT THERE IS REAL
CONCERN THAT THE FORCES, NOW UP TO 5,000 AND SCHEDULED SOON
TO REACH 6,000 MEN, MIGHT BE WITHDRAWN. THE FRENCH HAVE
EXPRESSED CONCERN. IF THE UN PRESENCE STARTS TO BECOME

UNSTRUNG IT WOULD BE A DISASTER FOR ALL CONCERNED. THE SECRETARY SAID WE HOPE SAUDI ARABIA WOULD USE ITS INFLUENCE ON ARAFAT TO BRING THE PALESTINIANS UNDER CONTROL.

AMBASSADOR YOUNG NOTED THE CHAOTIC SITUATION; THERE ARE SEVERAL FACTIONS WHICH THE PALESTINIANS HAVE TO CONTROL. HE NOTED THIS IS THE FIRST SUSTAINED VIOLATION OF THE MISSION OF UN FORCES AND ESTABLISHES, FOR EXAMPLE, AN

UNFORTUNATE PRECEDENT FOR AFRICA WHERE IN TIME THERE MAY BE AS MANY AS 10,000 UN PEACEKEEPING PERSONNEL.

THE SECRETARY CONTINUED THAT PRIME MINISTER BEGIN HAD PROMISED TO MEET WITH THE ISRAELI CABINET IN THE NEXT FEW DAYS TO SET A DATE FOR THE WITHDRAWAL OF ISRAELI FORCES FROM SOUTH LEBANON, BUT THIS WOULD OF COURSE BE DIFFICULT IF THE CONTINUATION OF THE UN PRESENCE APPEARS UNCERTAIN. IN RESPONSE TO PRINCE SAUD'S QUESTION, THE SECRETARY SAID WE DO NOT FEEL ARAFAT IS DOING ALL HE COULD TO BRING THE PALESTINIANS UNDER CONTROL.

PRINCE SAUD SAID THAT ISRAEL'S SETTING A DATE FOR A PERMANENT WITHDRAWAL WOULD HELP. HE ADDED THAT THE SYRIANS SHOULD BE HELPFUL.

THE SECRETARY SAID WE HAVE TALKED TO THE SYRIANS.
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MR. SAUNDERS NOTED THE IMPORTANCE OF A PARALLEL APPROACH IN WHICH WE PUSH FOR A DATE FOR ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL AND AT THE SAME TIME WORK TO ASSURE THE SAFETY OF UNIFIL.

PRINCE SAUD SAID THAT FROM SAUDI TALKS WITH THE PALESTINIANS THEY APPEAR TO BE SERIOUS ABOUT COOPERATING WITH UNIFIL BUT THAT SAG WOULD BE RAISING THIS QUESTION AGAIN. HE CONTINUED THAT ANY APPARENT CONFLICT BETWEEN THE CAIRO ACCORDS AND THE UN FORCE MANDATE IN SOUTH LEBANON IS MANAGEABLE AND THAT THE REAL PROBLEM IS UNCERTAINTY ABOUT ISRAEL'S INTENTIONS TO WITHDRAW. SHOULD ISRAEL ANNOUNCE ITS WITHDRAWAL THIS WOULD BE AN IMPORTANT BREAKTHROUGH AND THE ANNOUNCEMENT SHOULD COME SOON TO AVOID A DETERIORATING SITUATION.

AMBASSADOR YOUNG NOTED THAT THE UN HAD BEEN GENERALLY SUPPORTIVE OF THE PALESTINIAN CAUSE. TROOPS FROM SEVERAL NATIONS HAVE SUFFERED CASUALTIES FROM PALESTINIAN ATTACKS IN SOUTH LEBANON. IT IS IMPORTANT TO REALIZE THAT THE UN PEACEKEEPING FORCE IS NOT SO MUCH A FIGHTING FORCE AS A MORAL AUTHORITY AND IT IS THIS MORAL AUTHORITY THAT IS

BEING CHALLENGED IN SOUTH LEBANON.

PRINCE SAUD SAID THAT SAUDI GOVERNMENT IS IN COMPLETE
AGREEMENT THAT THE AUTHORITY OF THE PEACEKEEPING FORCE
MUST BE UPHELD.

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